

LXV.

MEMOIRS

OF

LITERATURE.

MONDAY, June 11. 1711.

I.

A † THIRD Extract of the *Essay upon the Goodness of God, the Free-Will of Man, and the Origin of Evil.*

III. **T**HEODICÆUS having shewn in general how *Faith* may be reconciled with *Reason*, proceeds to that Part of his Book, which is properly entitl'd *An Essay upon the Goodness of God, the Free-Will of Man, and the Origin of Evil*, and undertakes to answer several Difficulties, that concern not only revealed but also natural Religion. The Objections, that may be rais'd about the Origin of Evil, and its Consequences, are sufficiently known; and therefore I think I need not propose them to the Readers. The Author, far from being afraid of sinking under the Weight of those Difficulties, discovers a sort of Confidence not unbecoming so great a Philosopher, which he expresses in these Words: "The Goodness of my Cause gives me some Assurance: "If there are some plausible Appearances against us, we have some Demonstrations on our side; and I may boldly tell any Adversary:

"*Aspice, quàm mage sit nostrum penetrabile telum.*

God, says the Author, is the first Reason of Things: For those that are limited, (as every thing is, which we see and know by Experience,) are contingent, and have nothing in them that renders their Existence necessary; it being manifest that Time, Space, and Matter, which are uniform in themselves, might have received quite different Motions and Figures, and in a different Order. We must therefore look for the Reason of the Existence of the World, which is the whole Collection of contingent Things, in that Substance, which carries the Reason of its Existence along with it, and is consequently Necessary and Eternal. That Cause must be also Intelligent: For this World, which does actually exist, being contingent, and an infinite Number of other Worlds being equally possible; the Cause of the World must have considered all those possible Worlds to pitch upon one; which could

not be done but by an *Understanding*, that has the Ideas of all possible Things. This intelligent Cause must be infinite in all Respects, and absolutely perfect in *Power, Wisdom, and Goodness*, since it tends to every thing that is possible. And because all Things are link'd and connected together, there can be no Reason to admit more than One First Cause. Its Understanding is the Source of *Essences*, and its Will is the Origin of *Existences*. This is in a few Words the Proof of one only God with his Perfections, and of the Origin of Things.

That supreme Wisdom, attended with an infinite Goodness, could not but chuse the best. If the Works of God were not the best, something better might have been done; which is inconsistent with his infinite Wisdom. If among all possible Worlds, there was not one that is the best, God would have produced none. I call *World* the whole System and Collection of Things that exist, lest it should be said, that many Worlds might exist at different Times and in different Places. For all of them must be accounted but one World, or if you will, one *Universe*. And supposing that all Places and Times are fill'd up, it will be true still that they might have been fill'd up after an infinite manner of Ways, and that there is an Infinity of possible Worlds, whereof God must needs have chosen the best, since he does nothing without acting according to the Supreme Reason.

If it be said that the World might have been without Sin and Misery; I deny that such a World would have been the best. For we must know that all Things are link'd together in each possible World: The Universe, whatever it may be, is all of a Piece, like an Ocean: The least Motion produces its Effect to any Distance, though that Effect becomes less sensible in Proportion to the Distance. So that God has settled every thing before-hand once for all, having foreseen Prayers, good and evil Actions, &c. and every thing did *ideally* contribute before its Existence to the Resolution that was taken about the Existence of all Things: Insomuch that no Alteration can be made in the Universe (no more than in a Number) without destroying its Essence, or if you will, its numerical Individuality. And therefore, if the least Evil that happens in the World, was wanting in it, it would not be *this* World, which, all things duly considered, was accounted the best by the wise Creator who chose it.

'Tis true one may imagine some possible Worlds without Sin and Misery; but those Worlds would be in other Respects very much inferior to ours in Good. I cannot make you sensible of it by entering into Particulars; for can I know, and represent to you Infinites? Can I compare them together? But you ought to believe so, as well as I, *ab effectu*, since God has chosen this World such as it is. Besides, we know that an Evil does frequently pro-

† The Second Extract may be seen in the LXI. Sheet of these Memoirs.

duce a good thing, which would not have happen'd, had it not been for that Evil. Nay, two Evils have frequently occasion'd a very good thing :

Et, si fata volunt, bina venena juvant.

A little Acidity, Acrimony, or Bitterness, is sometimes more pleasant than Sugar : Colours are heighten'd by Shadows ; and a Dissonance well placed renders Harmony more beautiful. We desire to be frighted by Rope-Dancers, who are ready to fall ; and to shed Tears at the Representation of a Tragedy. Does any one sufficiently relish the Happiness of a good Health, who has never been sick ? Is it not most times necessary, that a little Evil should render a Good more sensible, and consequently greater ?

It will be said that Evils are very great and numerous, if compared with good Things ; but it is a Mistake. Want of Attention is the only thing, that lessens our Happiness ; and 'tis necessary that this Attention should be raised by a Mixture of Evil. Let us supply by Reflexion what is wanting to our Perception, to be more sensible of our Happiness. Were it not for the Knowledge of a future Life, I believe most People would be willing at the Point of Death to begin a new Life, upon Condition that they should enjoy as much Good and undergo as many Evils, especially if they were of another Kind. They would be contented with a Change, without requiring a more happy Condition.

Whoever considers the Weakness and Frailty of Human Bodies, must needs admire the Wisdom and Goodness of the Author of Nature, who made them so lasting, and renders our Lives so tolerable. 'Tis no wonder if Men are sometimes Sick ; but 'tis a wonder they are not always so. This Consideration ought to raise in us a greater Admiration for the Mechanism of our Bodies, which though frail and subject to Corruption, are capable of maintaining themselves ; for Nature cures us rather than Physick. But that very Frailty is a Consequence of the Nature of Things ; unless any one should say that this sort of Creatures, which are endowed with Reason, and clothed with Flesh and Bones, should not be in the World. But it would be an Imperfection, which some ancient Philosophers would have call'd *Vacuum Formarum*, a Vacuum in the Order of Species.

Those, who far from complaining of Nature & Fortune, appear well pleased with them, tho' their Condition be none of the best, seem to me the wisest. For, not to say that such Complaints are ill-grounded, 'tis an actual Rebellion against Providence. No Man ought to be very ready to join with the Malecontents in the State wherein he lives ; and none ought to appear discontented in the City of God, since it cannot be done without great Injustice. Those Books, that treat of the Misery of Mankind, such as that of Pope Innocent III. are none of the most useful. We increase our Evils, by reflecting upon them, instead of considering the good Things which are far more numerous. Much less do I value a sort of Books, like that of the Abbot Esprit, concerning the Falsity of human Virtues, (*De la fausseté des Vertus humaines.*) Such a Book is only proper to make us put an ill Construction upon every thing, and to render Men such as they are represented by that Author.

However, it must be confess'd that there are several Disorders in this Life, which particularly appear by the Prosperity of many Wicked Persons, and the Unhappiness of many Good Men. But it ought to be consider'd, that the Wicked are frequently punish'd in this World, and that Virtue will be for ever rewarded in another Life.

It will be objected, That even after this Life, Misery will prevail above Happiness, since there are but few Elect ; which appears inconsistent with the Goodness of the Supreme Being. In answer to this Difficulty, granting that the Number of those, who are to be tormented in Hell, will be incomparably greater than that of the Blessed ; the Evil will still appear like nothing, if compared with the Good, considering the true Extent of the City of God. The Ancients had a narrow Notion of the Works of the Author of Nature ; and St. Augustin, for want of knowing the Modern Discoveries, was not a little perplexed, when he undertook to justify the Prevalency of Evil. It was in former Times a common

Opinion, That the Earth was the only Part of the World furnish'd with Inhabitants ; nay, the Ancients were afraid of admitting any *Antipodes* : They believed, that the Rest of the World did only consist of some Shining Globes, and Chrystallin Spheres. But, in our Days, it will be acknowledg'd that there is an innumerable Number of Globes, as large and larger than ours, which may be inhabited by Rational Creatures, tho' it does not follow that they are Men. Our Earth is only a Planet ; that is, one of the Six principal *Satellites* of our Sun. And because all Fixed Stars are so many Suns, 'tis plain the Earth is a very inconsiderable Part of the Universe, since it is only an *Appendix* of one Sun. Perhaps all the Suns are inhabited by Happy Creatures ; at least we have no Reason to believe that many of their Inhabitants will be damned. Besides, considering that there is no Reason to affirm that there are Stars every where ; it may very well be, that there is a Vast Space beyond the Region of the Stars. Whether it be the *Empyrean Heaven*, or not, that Immense Space which surrounds all that Region, may be fill'd with Glory and Happiness. It may be conceived like an Ocean, which receives the Rivers of all Happy Creatures, when they have attain'd to their Perfection in the System of the Stars. What will then become of the Consideration of our Globe and its Inhabitants ? Will it not be a thing incomparably less than a Physical Point, since our Earth is like a Point, with respect to the Distance of some Fixed Stars ? And therefore the Proportion of that Part of the Universe which we know, being lost in a kind of Nothingness, if compared to what is unknown to us ; and all the Evils, that can be objected, being only in that kind of Nothingness ; it may very well be, that all Evils are almost nothing, in Comparison with all the Good Things that are in the Universe.

Theodiceus proceeds to enquire into the Cause of Evil ; and observes, that it is in the Ideal Nature of Creatures, inasmuch as that Nature is comprehended in the Eternal Truths that are in the Divine Understanding, independently upon the Will of God. It must be consider'd, says he, that there is an *Original Imperfection in Creatures* before Sin, because the Creatures are essentially limited : Hence it is that they know not every thing, and may be mistaken, and commit other Faults. The *Region of Eternal Truths* in the Divine Understanding, ought to be placed in the room of *Matter*, when the Question is to know the true Cause of Things. That Region is the *Ideal Cause of Evil*, (if one may say so,) as well as of Good : But, properly speaking, the *Formal Part of Evil* has no *Efficient Cause* ; it consists in a *Privation*.

Tho' *Natural Evil* or *Misery*, and *Moral Evil* or *Sin* be not necessary, yet they are possible, by virtue of those *Eternal Truths*. And because that Immense *Region of Truths* contains all Possibilities, there must be an infinite Number of possible Worlds ; Evil must come into many of them ; and even the *Best* of them all must contain some : This is what determin'd God to permit Evil. That Supreme Being could not be said to act according to his Wisdom, and Goodness, and all his Perfections, if he did not chuse what is absolutely the best, tho' Moral Evil be involved in it by the Supreme Necessity of *Eternal Truths*. The Author's Conclusion upon this Head is, That God wills all manner of Good antecedently, the *Best* consequently as an *End*, and *Natural Evil* as a *Means* ; and that he only permits *Moral Evil*, as being connected and link'd with what is best. And therefore the *Consequent Will* of God, is only permissive with respect to Sin.

In the next place, the Author answers the Objections grounded upon the *Physical Concurrence* of God with the Creatures, and those that concern the Liberty of Man. He places that Liberty in Spontaneity and Choice, and not in an Indetermination, or Indifference of *Equilibrium*. Such an *Equilibrium*, says he, is impossible, and absolutely contrary to Experience : Whoever examines himself, will find that there is some Cause or Reason that determines the Will, tho' we are not always sensible of it, no more than we are sensible when we go out of a Door, why we set the Right Foot before the Left, or the Left before the Right. There is always a prevailing Reason that inclines the Will, without necessitating it. The

The Will is never moved but by the Representation of a Good, which prevails above the contrary Representations. Every body owns it with respect to God, Good Angels, and the Blessed Souls, without pretending that they are not free. God does not fail to chuse what is best, but he is not forced to it; and there is no Necessity in the Object of his Choice, for another Series of Things is equally possible. His Choice is free and independent upon Necessity, because he chuses the best World among many that are possible; and his Will is only determined by the prevailing Goodness of the Object. And therefore it is not an Imperfection in God, nor in the Angels and Blessed Souls: On the contrary, it would be a great Imperfection, or rather a manifest Absurdity, if it were otherwise, even in Men, and if they could act without any Reason inclining them to it. No Instance can be given of such a Liberty; and when any body resolves upon a thing out of Humour, to shew that he is a Free Agent; the Pleasure, or the Advantage he thinks to reap from that Affection, is one of the Reasons that move him to it.

Every thing (says the Author) is certain and determined before-hand in Man, as every where else; and a Human Soul is a Kind of *Spiritual Automaton*; tho' Contingent Actions in general, and Free Actions in particular, are not necessary of an absolute Necessity, which would be inconsistent with Contingency. The Readers may easily perceive, that *Theodicaeus* finds it no difficult thing to reconcile God's Prescience with such a Liberty; and therefore I shall say nothing of it. His Answers to the Objections against the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, are built upon the Principles above-mention'd, and perhaps will not appear so satisfactory as several others. I might enlarge this Extract; but I rather chuse not to do it. The Fourth Extract, (which will be the last,) will sufficiently satisfy the Curiosity of the Readers, and give them a clear Notion of the Author's System.

II.

SOME Conjectures and Reflexions upon the Substance of Fire and Light; by M. LEMERY the Younger. Extracted from the History of the Royal Academy of Sciences for the Year 1709.

According to the *Cartesians*, Fire consists only in a violent Agitation of the Particles of a very subtil Matter.

But because Experience teaches us, that the *Regular Antimonii* calcinated in a Burning-Glass grows more heavy, as all Metallick Bodies do, when they have been exposed to a great Fire; M. Lemery, who rightly thinks, that new Particles get into those Bodies, without which it would be a very difficult thing to conceive how they grow more heavy, pretends that those new Particles are a Substance of Fire and Light, and have, besides their Agitation and Subtlety, a Figure peculiar to them, whereby they are determin'd to be essentially Fire. So that a Matter with a different Figure, tho' more agitated and more subtil, would not be a Substance of Fire; and that the Substance of Fire does not cease to be so, tho' it loses Part of its Motion.

'Tis the Action of that Matter, according to M. Lemery, that occasions Heat, Light, the Fluidity of Liquors, and the Melting of Metals.

That Matter acts according more violently, as it is more plentiful, and closer.

The Sun is a vast Collection of Particles of Fire and Light: It heats at a great Distance, by the Interposition of the like Particles of Matter, placed in the *Interstitia* of the great Fluid, that lies between it and the Earth, and driven with great Violence towards the Terrestrial Bodies.

It is with our common Flame as with the Sun, observing a due Proportion of their Distances, and the Agitation of their Particles: For the Sun and the smallest Flame do not essentially differ, but only more or less.

Water, when frozen, is in its proper State. Fluidity is not natural to it; but it is occasion'd by the Action of the Particles of Fire, which are seldom in such a small Quantity as is requisite to make it cease.

On the contrary, a great Quantity of Particles of Fire is necessary for the melting of Metals: And therefore they quickly resume their Solidity, when they are removed from the Cause of their Fusion.

Some Bodies, such as Oil and Grease, are quickly inflamed, because they contain many Particles of Fire, which remain enclosed in small Cavities, till they are set at Liberty by an external Agent; by which means they break out, and appear under the Form of a Flame.

Though calcinated Bodies receive the Matter of Fire during the Calcination, they are not sufficiently furnish'd with it to catch Fire as Oil does. The Effect of that Matter plainly appears in quick-Lime, by the violent E-bullition occasion'd by a mixture of Water, which separating the Particles of Lime, disentangles those of Fire that are enclosed in them.

It ought to be observed; 1. That though this Matter shut up in the Cavities of calcinated Bodies, seems to be deprived of its Functions; yet it continues to be what it was before it got into them; and that a Matter, much more subtil and agitated, continually runs in those Places where it lies, and keeps up its Motion. 2. That the Matter of Fire cannot get out of calcinated Bodies. The Reason of it is, that the Pores which gave that Matter a free Passage, because they grew larger by the Impression of the Fire, have been contracted since the Calcination.

III.

SOME Observations upon the Melancholy Delirium, by Dr. VIEUSSENS. Extracted from the same Book.

Dr. Vieussens explains the *Melancholy Delirium* by a New Supposition, which is very Curious. He places the Seat of the Functions of the Mind in the Oval Center. M. de Fontenelle gives an Account of his Hypothesis in the following manner.

"According to the Discoveries and the System of Dr. Vieussens, who has made a great Progress in anatomical Enquiries, the Oval Center is a Texture of very small Vessels, that have a Communication one with another by an infinite Number of much smaller Vessels, produced by all the Points of their outward Surface. The arterial Blood is so far subtilized in those first small Vessels as to become animal Spirit; and runs in the Second under the Form of Spirits. 'Tis in the inside of that prodigious Number of Conduits almost imperceptible that all those Motions are perform'd, that are attended with Ideas; and the Impressions, which those Motions leave in them, are the Traces that revive past Ideas.

"I must not forget to observe, that the Oval Center is plac'd at the Origin of the Nerves; which is no small Proof of the Function ascribed to it.

"If this Mechanism be admitted, it will be an easy thing to imagine that the Soundness of the Mind depends upon an even, free, and regular Course of the Spirits in those small Conduits. If most of those Vessels are sunk, as it happens in Sleep, the Spirits running in those that remain open, revive at random some Ideas, that generally have no Coherence; and the Soul does nevertheless put them together, for want of having some other Ideas, whereby she may judge of their Inconsistence. If, on the contrary, all the small Conduits are open, and the Spirits convey'd into them too plentifully,

" plentifully, and with too great a Rapidity; a Multitude
 " of very lively Ideas start up all at once, which the
 " Soul can neither distinguish, nor compare: This is
 " Frenzy. If there is only such an Obstruction in some
 " small Conduits, that the Spirits cease to run in them,
 " the Ideas that were annex'd to them are entirely lost,
 " and the Soul cannot use them in her Operations;
 " wherefore she will argue extravagantly, whenever those
 " Ideas are necessary to argue right. Upon all other
 " Occasions her Judgments will be found. This is the
 " Melancholy Delirium.

" Dr. Vieussens shews, that his Supposition does very
 " well agree with all the Observations that have been

" made upon that Disease. It proceeds from an Obstru-
 " ction; and therefore it must be produced by a thick and
 " slow Blood; which is the Reason why it is never at-
 " tended with a Fever. Those who live in Hot Coun-
 " tries, whose Blood is deprived of its most subtil Parti-
 " cles by too great a Transpiration; those who use a
 " Course Food; those who have been struck with great
 " Fear, &c. must needs be more subject to a Melancho-
 " ly Delirium. I shall not enter upon a larger Enume-
 " ration, lest I should go too far: There is hardly any
 " Head, tho' never so sound, but what has some small
 " Conduit of the Oval Center thoroughly stop'd.

LEIPSICK.

M. Böhmer has lately put out a Book, entituled,

*Justi Henningi Böhmeri D. Prof. P. & Fac. Jur. Assessoris in
 Regia Fridericiana, Dissertationes Juris Ecclesiastici antiqui
 ad PLINIUM Secundum & TERTULLIANUM, genuinas Ori-
 gines præcipuarum materialium Juris Ecclesiastici demonst-
 ratæ. Lipsiæ. 1711. in 8vo.*

This Book contains Five Dissertations upon that Epistle
 of Pliny the Younger, which concerns the Christians,
 and as many upon some remarkable Passages of Tertul-
 lian.

In the Ist Dissertation upon Pliny's Letter, the Author
 treats *de stato Christianorum die*. In the IId, *De antelucanis
 Christianorum coetibus*. In the IIIId, *De disciplina Christiano-
 rum confederata*. In the IVth, *De coitionibus Christiano-
 rum ad capiendum cibum*. In the Vth, *De Christianorum coe-
 tibus in vicis & agris*.

In the Ist Dissertation upon Tertullian, the Author en-
 quires into the Difference between the Clergy and the
 Laity. The IId is entituled *de confessu Ordinis Ecclesiastici*.
 In the IIIId, M. Böhmer discourses of the ancient State of
 the Christian Church. In the IVth, he treats *de Jure Lai-
 corum sacerdotali*: And in the Vth, *De Jure dandi Baptis-
 mum*. The Author undertakes to confute Mr. Dodwell in
 several Places: His Notions are very different from those
 of that Learned Man; and it may be said in general that
 the Clergy will not approve several Things contain'd in
 this Book. To give an Instance of M. Böhmer's Opini-
 ons, he pretends to prove that the Presbyters were at
 first Laymen; and that they went by the Name of Cler-
 gymen, when they began to assume the Priesthood; which
 they did (*says he*) to the great Prejudice of the Church.

D O L E.

Some Observations upon the Nature, Virtue, and Use
 of the Mineral and Physical Waters of *Souche* near
 this City, have been lately publish'd here.

*Observations sur la nature, la vertu, & l'usage des Eaux
 minerales & medecinales de Souche pres de Dole en Franche-
 Comté.* 'Tis a Pamphlet of 36 Pages.

The Author observes that this Spring, which is so plen-
 tiful that it affords a small Brook, was always thought to
 be brackish; and that, some Years ago, the Virtue of

its Water was only known to the Cattle and the Birds,
 which flock'd to it from all Parts. Tho' these Waters
 seem to be very pure and simple, they are mixed with
 Abundance of Mineral Particles, taken off from the Sub-
 terraneous Mines thro' which they run. The prevailing
 Minerals are a Nitrous Salt and Sulphur, as it plainly ap-
 pears not only from an acid Taste, but also from the Va-
 pour which arises from them. The Author adds, that
 the Blackness of the Earth imbibed with those Waters,
 shews, that they want neither Iron nor Vitriol; which
 is all that he dares affirm about those Waters, till their
 Nature be better known by a more exact Analysis. In
 the mean time, the Experiments that have been made,
 sufficiently prove that those Waters are very light, cool-
 ing, purging, aperitive and deterfive, and consequently
 admirable for all Distempers that proceed from too great
 a Heat, for the viscous and slimy Matter gather'd in the
 Stomach, for Opilations, Hyfterick Pains, &c.

The Author, in the last Chapters of his Dissertation,
 shews at what Time, and in what Quantity those Waters
 ought to be drunk, &c. His Observations are grounded
 upon the Principles of Natural Philosophy, and proposed
 in such a manner as to leave no Doubts in the Minds of
 the Readers.

MONTPELLIER.

THE Discoveries relating to the Silk of Spiders, (*see
 the XXth Sheet of these Memoirs*) that have been
 made by M. Bon, President of the Court of Accompts,
 Aids and Finances in this City, have occasion'd another
 Discovery, that may be of some Use. M. Fabre and M.
 de la Mesangere considering that Spiders afford Silk, came
 to think that Caterpillars might also afford some. The
 truth of their Conjecture has been confirmed by Experi-
 ence. They have lately publish'd their Discoveries in a
 Letter written to the Marquis de Regusse, who makes a
 great Figure in the Commonwealth of Learning, and ap-
 plies himself to the most curious Parts of natural Philo-
 sophy.

P A R I S.

THE Abbot Bossuet has sent to the Press a Posthu-
 mous Book of his Uncle, the late Bishop of Meaux,
 entituled, *Elevations sur les Mysteres*. He will also publish
 the *Meditations* of that Prelate upon the Gospels. Those two
 Works contain many Noble Thoughts express'd in a ve-
 ry beautiful Style.

L O N D O N: Printed by J. Roberts: And Sold by A. Baldwin, near the
 Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane. (Price 2 d.)